

IPEDS Module 01: Introduction to the Integrated Postsecondary Education System (IPEDS)**Slide 1 of 12**

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This module provides users with an overview of the NCES Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, or IPEDS, survey data.

This module will introduce you to the survey universe, data collection cycle, and data availability. This module also provides a broad overview of the topics for which data are available for analysis to help researchers answer the fundamental question, “Are these IPEDS data for me?” The subsequent IPEDS data training modules contained within this system will discuss some of these topics in greater detail and address questions about how to effectively use the dataset for analytic purposes.

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The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System is a system of interrelated survey components conducted annually by the National Center for Education Statistics, or NCES, to describe postsecondary education in the United States. IPEDS gathers information from every college, university, and technical and vocational institution that participates in the Title IV federal student financial aid programs. The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, requires that institutions that participate in or apply for these federal student aid programs report to IPEDS. The data collected by IPEDS covers basic characteristics of institutions, enrollments, completions and completers, graduation rates and other outcome measures, faculty and staff, finances, institutional prices, student financial aid, admissions and academic libraries. Congress, federal agencies, state governments, education providers, professional associations, private businesses, media, students, parents, and others rely on IPEDS data for this basic information on postsecondary institutions.

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The IPEDS universe includes all institutions that are eligible for federal student aid. This includes institutions of all levels and sectors, as well as both degree-granting and non-degree granting institutions. About two-thirds of the institutions that are required to complete the IPEDS surveys are degree-granting institutions. It is mandatory for any institution that has a program participation agreement with the Office of Federal Student Aid to report to IPEDS.

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Institutions that are not eligible for federal student aid must request to be part of IPEDS, and are subject to a mandatory review prior to inclusion. They must participate in the IPEDS fall data collection to appear in the NCES College Navigator tool, which is the main reason why most institutions that are not eligible for federal student aid choose to be part of IPEDS. A link to the **College Navigator tool** is available on this screen, if you would like to explore it further.

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The percentage of the non-federal student aid institutions represented in IPEDS is unknown; only information about the non-federal student aid institutions that report to IPEDS is available.

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IPEDS is a series of 12 interrelated survey components covering nine major areas, including institutional characteristics, enrollment, completions, graduation rates and outcome measures, admissions, student financial aid, human resources, finance, and academic libraries.

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IPEDS data releases are based on the data collection cycle. There are three data collections and three main data releases each year. The three data collections are:

- Fall, which includes institutional characteristics, completions, and 12-month enrollment;
- Winter, which has student financial aid, graduation rates, graduation rates 200, admissions, and outcome measures; and
- Spring, which includes human resources, fall enrollment, finance, and academic libraries.

The data are released within a few months of the close of the data collection.

A general overview of the IPEDS calendar can be accessed by clicking on the link shown.

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The IPEDS data are released with the First Look Reports. To be notified when the IPEDS First Look Reports are released, you can sign up to receive the IPEDS email newsflashes by clicking on the link shown, opening the tab for NCES, and then selecting IPEDS.

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The IPEDS website, which can be accessed by clicking on the link shown, has IPEDS data going back to 1986. In addition, there are selected data from the Higher Education General Information System, or HEGIS, which was the predecessor to IPEDS. These data are for 1980, 1984, and 1985. The HEGIS data that are not available from the IPEDS website are stored at the International Archive of Education Data at the University of Michigan.

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There are a few caveats with regard to the data on the IPEDS website. Not all data are available for all years. A number of new surveys have been added over time and a number of new survey fields have also been added over time. Additionally, some elements may have been discontinued and some field definitions have changed over time. Finally, the Classification of Instructional Program, or CIP codes; Standard Occupational Classification, or SOC codes; and, race/ ethnicity are reviewed on a semi-regular schedule, and changes are made. Therefore, it is important to know that that data fields for the data that you wish to analyze may have changed over time.

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There are also optional year data, which are data that are required only in alternate years, but which some schools choose to submit every year. For example, for fall enrollment, enrollment by age is required only in odd years and residence of first-year students is required only in even years. For human resources, race/ethnicity is required only in odd years. So, researchers should be careful in using data that are optional in a given year.

Additionally, prior to the 2011 data collection, any time a new variable or a new survey component was added, submission of that variable or survey component was optional the first year. Therefore, when you are looking at data collected before 2011, the first collection year of data will be missing for some institutions.

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This module has provided you with an overview of the NCES IPEDS datasets. It has introduced you to the IPEDS universe; data collection cycle, and data availability; and highlights of the topics for which data are available for analysis. In addition, it has provided resources that can be accessed through the DLDT system and on the NCES website.

You may now proceed to the next module in the series or exit the module.